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dialogue

The Staff Newsletter of the Ministry of Community and Social Services

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Restructuring our social service system

MCCSS *Restructuring Framework: A Work In Progress* is a document that sets the ministry's directions for organizing Ontario's system of social services so that it is responsive to the needs of the client, more effective and more efficient. The paper also commits the ministry to hold itself and its social services partners accountable to real expectations with respect to restructuring.

Restructuring aims to balance the need to maintain and improve services to consumers and communities with the reality that there is a static or declining amount of money available to pay the bill.

"People want reasonable and consistent access to co-ordinated, comprehensive support systems," Deputy Minister Rosemary Proctor comments. "To improve services, we need to recognize opportunities to make our delivery systems simple and accessible."

There are two ways to do this — systems management and local planning.

These are not new ideas, says the deputy. "They are built on the best practices and collective wisdom of our ministry staff and our partners."

"As you can see," notes the deputy, "we are trying to build a better social services system through restructuring. This is going to change significantly the way we do business internally and with our partners."

Local planning groups will play a major role in advising the ministry about their service priorities, balancing local needs with provincial priorities within the available resources.

This is a big change, but not an

unmanageable one. We need to build on our strengths and our experience and take a step-by-step approach.

We've already begun to learn by doing — for example, we have the Children's Services Policy Framework, and a Developmental Services Framework is also in progress. The Community Innovations Fund will put \$6.8 million over the next three years toward assisting our transfer payment agencies in developing innovative ways to streamline services and achieve efficiencies.

Orientation sessions with ministry staff will be held at the corporate and field levels. So far sessions have been held at four area offices and three corporate gatherings, with more to come.

The Restructuring Framework Project Team is headed by project manager Rose Langhout. "We are working with an interdivisional working group to develop a realistic, practical implementation plan for restructuring at the request of Ministry Management Committee," says Rose. "We will also be preparing a ministry status report on restructuring for spring 1995."

Copies of the framework have been sent to about 3,400 transfer payment agencies and municipalities after being focus-tested with internal and external stakeholders.

If you would like a copy of the framework, contact the Restructuring Framework Project at Corporate Policy Branch, 3rd floor Hepburn Block, 80 Grosvenor Street, Toronto M7A 1E9 (tel. 416-325-5832).

jobLink funding announced

On Sept. 23 Minister Tony Silipo was in Hamilton, to announce that Hamilton/Wentworth is one of 11 communities where jobLink centres will be established this year. The other locations are in Bruce County,

Regional Municipality of Waterloo, Sault Ste. Marie, the District of Algoma, the District of Sudbury, Metropolitan Toronto, the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton, Cornwall, Kingston City/Kingston township and Windsor.

These communities will share in more than \$20 million for training expansion and \$1.8 million in funding for resource centres. The centres will help people on social assistance obtain the training and access to supports they need to get work and off social assistance.

A total of \$50 million — shared equally between the province and the federal government — will be spent on these and other jobLink initiatives this fiscal year.

United Way gets under way with "the hand that helps the most"

by Cate Parker,
MCSS United Way

All over Ontario, MCSS employees have been taking part in United Way events since the campaign officially was launched with the Walk-a-thon Sept. 11.

The ministry's campaign coordinator is Teresa DiFalco, who is overseeing all the ministry's efforts across the province.

Thanks for Giving is the theme of the campaign because the ministry kick-off date of Oct. 6 came so close to the Thanksgiving holiday, says Teresa. The plan is for a short but intense campaign focused on fundraising and "fun-raising." Many special events are planned during the course of the campaign, which ends Nov. 10.

And, if you have the stamina, how about joining the MCSS stair-climbing team at the CN Tower Stair Climb event on Oct. 30? Collect pledges from family and

The hamburger's for dad Steve Peck — son Christopher, at six months, is a little too young to appreciate the flavour of a barbecue. Steve, who is systems officer for Communications and Marketing Branch, was attending a kick-off barbecue for the head office United Way campaign.



friends, then climb the 1,760 steps to the top of the tower to join a Halloween party. If you're interested, contact the ministry's special events co-ordinator, Irv Kirstein, at 416-325-5196 at Communications and Marketing Branch.

Editor's note: Dialogue would be happy to publish your photos of United Way fundraising events in the next and future issues of Dialogue. Send them to the Hepburn Block address on Page 4.

All photos will be returned.



Photo: Julia Maczynski

Downsizing goal announced

The ministry must reduce its workforce by 189 people before the end of this fiscal year, but the reduction is to be done so that the impact on staff is as minimal as possible.

Staff reduction is a goal of the government's 1994 budget and other ministries are also going to do their share, says Deputy Minister Rosemary Proctor. The overall goal is to have the Ontario Public Service at 81,562 people by March 31 — a total reduction of 1,065 over the fiscal year.

"We're already well on our way to meeting the target," says Rosemary Proctor. "We expect to achieve this goal through initiatives that have already been announced, on-going redeployment and attrition such as early retirement."

MCSS must have a staff level of 9,437 by March 31, 1995, which is the end of the government's fiscal year. This compares to the staff level we had on March 31, 1994, of 9,626.

MCSS has an excellent track record of placing people through redeployment, Rosemary noted. For example, many staff who used to work in facilities for people with developmental disabilities are now working in the social assistance area.

The deputy noted that our goal has to be met in addition to the 474 new positions MCSS is adding in order to manage this year's social assistance initiatives.

Questions can be directed to Jacqueline Palmer in the workforce planning unit of Human Resources (416-327-4803).



Photo: Brian Pickell

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The ESR focus groups: Sensing the issues

In July, the Employment Systems Review project conducted seven focus groups after requesting participation from employees. These groups were with Francophones, persons with disabilities, racial minorities, Aboriginal/First Nations people, women, women with more than one designation and non-designated persons.

These focus groups were intended to elicit a broad spectrum of experiences and perceptions. While the results are still being reviewed, common themes were noted.

Here are a few examples of general barriers as perceived/identified by various groups which affect all peoples:

Recruitment Barriers

1. The present hiring process is subject to the influence of favouritism and advantage based on friendship. The competition/interview process is flexible enough for selections to be manipulated.
2. Vacancies are staffed inconsistently; formal competitions are not always used.
3. Interview questions are known to have been shared among friends and family members.
4. The process of reference-checking through e-mail is potentially dangerous.
5. There is over-reliance on job interviews to determine successful candidates.
6. Competitions are inconsistently evaluated.
7. The 40-kilometre restriction excludes large numbers of candidates.

Mobility Barriers

1. There are insufficient designated-group members working in MCSS to reflect their numbers in the community.
2. Managers are not adequately prepared to develop, coach and monitor staff.
3. Access criteria for development

MCSS

- opportunities are lacking.
4. Few training opportunities are available for staff who serve their communities in other languages.
5. There is favouritism/nepotism/sexism in the processes which

support opportunities for mobility.

Work Environment Barriers

1. Nepotism in terms of recruiting and supporting relatives/in-laws and close family friends is perceived as widespread.
2. Commitment from senior management for employment equity is lacking.
3. Culture training for staff is lacking.
4. Recognition for good performance, working longer hours and initiative-taking is lacking.
5. Speaking another language in the workplace is sometimes criticized by others who don't speak it.

Employment Equity Barriers

1. Job qualifications and credentials are not always bona-fide (e.g. knowledge of legislation).
2. Knowledge and awareness of designated groups and issues are lacking amongst staff and management.
3. Commitment and support for employment equity is lacking from all levels of management.
4. Myths persist about employment equity (e.g. the perception that designated group members get jobs merely because of their group status).
5. Many employees feel threatened by employment equity.

The ESR thanks MCSS staff who participated.

All MCSS staff are encouraged to share their comments on this article. E-mail ESR_PROJECT or call project manager Hunter Saggart (416-327-4937 or -4912) or fax (416) 327-0568.



Frank DeFusco and Linda Page in Manuals Support show some of the guides and documents you don't need to keep around, now that most of their contents are readily accessible on computer through the Ministry Applications (MA) option on DEC.

Look it up on your computer

When you need to look up legislation or something about ministry policy, get into LEG or EMMA. LEG is MCSS Legislation and EMMA is the Electronic Manual of Ministry Administration. Both of these electronic resources are available through your Allin1 DEC account.

Jim Tighe, director of Financial and Administrative Services Branch, says these recent innovations are rapidly becoming popular with employees because they save time and effort.

"Rethinking how we do business, and utilizing the right tools and techniques, is fundamental in how we effectively manage our activities today," says Jim.

The database LEG makes all ministry Acts instantly available to you. EMMA will eventually contain all the ministry's policies and general administration guidelines. So far, some 200 subjects have been entered.

You can view (and print out) a table of contents within EMMA, as well as a user guide. If you have a specific subject in mind, you can conduct a "word search." The first time you want

to print something, you need to input the usual information about the printer designation; ask your systems officer for more instructions.

For more information, contact Manuals Support staff Linda Page at 416-326-8015 or Frank DeFusco at 416-326-8021.

To access LEG or EMMA:

1. Log on to DEC.
2. Type MA for Ministry Applications.
3. Type MP for Ministry Policy Manuals.
4. Type ? and press RETURN to list the available database codes.
5. Type EMMA or LEG.

Better Ideas



Social Assistance staff can find work-saving suggestions in the newly-released Social Assistance Better Ideas Compendium, put together by the Comprehensive Review Working Group.

This group, chaired by project lead Dave Morrow with Marilyn Stephenson as project manager, has compiled some 75 creative and innovative ideas for social assistance (SA) staff in a single document. The ideas came from SA staff from all over the province.

New ideas are encouraged, since the compendium will be regularly updated. Contact Andre Iannuzziello at Management Support Branch 416-325-5468, or e-mail IANNUZZIELLO_A.

RIGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE

Do young people know what their rights are?

Youth who are in any form of residential care in Ontario now know their rights — and their responsibilities — through a new poster, pamphlet and "rights handbook" published through the Office of Child and Family Service Advocacy.

"If it's wrong...right it!" will be distributed as part of an advocacy information package during October to

all area offices, child welfare agencies, children's mental health agencies and developmental service agencies for children in the province. It also is being placed in all young offender facilities and all probation offices.

Copies of these materials are available through the office by calling 416-325-5669 or 1-800-263-2841.



Children At Risk report available

Children At Risk, the report from the Standing Committee on Social Development released in July, is now available.

The report recommends a preventive approach toward programs and services that address child abuse, neglect and poverty — the conditions that create risky situations for children and youth. It recommends that preventive programs become a high priority for government funding, and that special incentive funding for innovative pilot projects be made available. It also recommends that vital children's services receive adequate and stable funding.

Minister Tony Silipo has noted that the ministry is moving to identify the factors that put children at risk through its policy framework for services funded under the *Child and Family Services Act*.

Copies of Children At Risk are available from Publications Ontario (the government bookstore) for \$6.42; for mail orders, call 416-326-5300 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

Kids To Work Nov. 30

Ministry employees in the Greater Toronto Area are encouraged to participate in Take Our Kids to Work on Nov. 30.

This event is aimed at Grade Nine students and is meant to show young people a realistic view of the work world. The students are to spend a work day with a parent, other relative or adult friend. Details about the program were published in the Sept. 16 issue of topical.

Kits are available to help workplaces organize their Nov. 30 activities. For more information, contact the Communications and Marketing Branch: Irv Kirstein (416-325-5196) or Debbie Adamson (416-325-5150).

TTY Directory available

The 1994 Ontario Government TTY Directory is now available to those who need to use a TTY machine.

This is a directory of all government offices and agencies with TTY (teletype) capabilities. It was compiled by the Centre for Disability and Work, an agency of the Ministry of Labour.

This directory is available for any employee who may need to use a TTY machine. For copies, contact the centre at 400 University Avenue, 10th Floor, Toronto M7A 1T7. (416-326-7810 or -0224 for TTY and voice; fax 416 416-325-6287).

FAMILIES



Volunteering: a family act

The coming trend in volunteering will be in getting entire families into the act, volunteer co-ordinators were told at a recent workshop.

Volunteering will appeal to families in the '90s because it will be a way for them to spend time together as a family doing something meaningful, said workshop presenter Syrele Bernstein of the Volunteer Centre of Metro Toronto. And when families volunteer, the community agency that they volunteer for gets two or more volunteers for their efforts. "It's a

win-win situation all around."

Why do families volunteer their time? For some, it's a way to show their children how other people live, or to teach values by example; for others, it's a commitment to a particular cause or purpose, or a way to contribute to the community. Some volunteer for religious reasons; others, because there is a threat to the survival of a service if they don't help. It's also often a fun way to spend time together, and a way to extend their personal networks.

In what ways can whole families volunteer? Workshop participants outlined some of the ways they've seen: sorting food during a food bank drive, sharing in respite care for a child with a developmental disability, school-aged brothers and sisters who tutor younger children, helping staff at a special event such as a fair or bazaar.

The workshop was held in Toronto in September for volunteer co-ordinators of various service agencies as an International Year of the Family event.



Face-painting was one of the fun activities for youngsters at the Kitchener Neighbourhood Family Day on Sept. 17 in recognition of International Year of the Family. (right)



Photo: Irv Kirstein

Residents of Huronia Regional Centre enjoyed hayrides, games and barbecues as part of their annual Family Day activities, which this year took International Year of the Family as its theme. (below)



Photo: Laurie Chelmsford

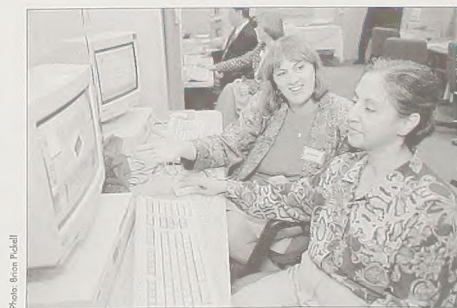


Photo: Brian Poddall

ISB open house

A number of MCSS staff took advantage of an open house hosted by Information Systems Branch on Sept. 22 and 23 to examine training tools for personal computer software and related materials available to ministry staff.

Visitors saw new products such as software for Lotus 1-2-3 spreadsheets, WordPerfect, Windows and DOS. About

90 guests attended the open house, including Deputy Minister Rosemary Proctor, who tried out some of the new technology at first hand.

In the photo, analyst Manjit Bhasin and support analyst Barbara Reynolds view WordPerfect Presentations, a tool for preparing presentation material with graphics.

Mind the speed limit

Staff who drive with a "lead foot" should know that being caught by photo radar in a ministry vehicle will not exempt them from paying the fine personally.

The ministry's policy for photo radar speeding tickets is the same as it is with other speeding tickets and parking fines: even if you're driving a ministry vehicle on ministry business, it's your responsibility to obey the law or pay the piper.

That policy was confirmed in an e-mail sent by Corporate Services Assistant Deputy Minister Lynn MacDonald on Sept. 20.

All ministry locations keep careful track of authorized users and require sign-out of vehicles, says ministry fleet co-ordinator Jim Lawrie. Even though photo-radar speeding tickets are sent to the registered owner of the vehicle — in this case, the ministry — you can be sure of being tracked down if you were responsible for it the day and time it was caught in its "Kodak moment."

People and Places

The new administrator for Adult Occupational Centre in Edgar and Huronia Regional Centre in Orillia is **Michael Cillis**. Mike was Community Programs Manager with Hamilton Area Office. He has also been acting administrator for Oxford Regional Centre and acting area manager in Windsor.

In Developmental Services Branch, **Barbara Cooper** is acting Developmental Services Program Co-ordinator while **Sylvia McConnell** is on maternity leave. Bruce Head is on secondment with the Ministry of Transportation; taking his place as acting Program Analyst is **Chris Battler**, who was a residential manager at Adult Occupational Centre. **Greg Douglas** is a Program Analyst and **Darlene Vewer** is a Policy Analyst with the branch.

At Human Resources Branch, **Mary Pat Moore** is on leave from the ministry to pursue a law degree. Her responsibilities as Manager of Planning and Development have been distributed to several people. **Janis Fraser** is responsible for the Workforce Impact Section; **Phil Branton** is responsible for the MCSS Library and Career Centre; **Marion Morley** has the lead for Planning and Development; and **Margaret Weightman** has Human Resources Systems. **John Robertson** has joined the Director's Office as executive assistant, reach him at 416-327-4750.

Brian Miki has begun a six-month secondment with Financial and Administrative Services Branch to be the project manager of the Comprehensive Assets Management Review. **Lynn Cassidy** from Management Support Branch has taken over Brian's responsibilities in Policy and Planning.

Information Systems Branch has bid a fond farewell to **Marg Elliott**, who retired in August. Marg had been with the ministry for 10 years, most recently as a trainer in information systems. As a trainer, Marg would travel throughout the province and hundreds of staff

have benefited from her patience and sense of humour as she introduced them to the intricacies of systems. Marg particularly loved travelling to the north. Her colleagues say she will finally have time to enjoy her granddaughter Laura, her dog McDuff and her cottage.

Glen Paskiw has accepted a position with the Attorney General's Substitute Decisions Project. **Kim**

Davison has taken his place as Policy Planning Co-ordinator to the ADM Corporate Services.

Kathy Macpherson, Manager of Workplace Accommodation and Safety Services (WASS), will be on leave until next July, and is travelling. **David Cope** from Financial and Capital Planning Branch will assume her responsibilities.

Magnus Allen has taken early retirement from Thistletown Regional Centre for Children and Adolescents after 31 years with the centre. Magnus started out as a Child Care Worker and moved on to become House Supervisor. At the time of retirement, he served as Liaison Officer for Thistletown Regional Centre. Among other

things, Magnus was very actively involved with the Multi-Cultural & Anti-Racist Task Force at Thistletown. It will be hard to replace Magnus' sense of humanity, spirit and energy. In

Communications and Marketing Branch,

Briefings and Issues Manager **Warren Hearne** has accepted a secondment to Human Resources; **Heather Kamps** has assumed his duties. **Mike Morley** has returned from secondment as Manager, Correspondence; Community Relations Manager **Robert Miller** has also returned from a parental leave.

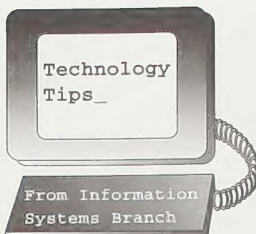
Valerie Gibbons retired from the OPS in July after 27 years of service. When she retired she was Deputy Minister of Management Board Secretariat. Much of her career was with MCSS, including deputy minister.



Mike Cillis



Marg Elliott



Lease or buy? Now you can choose

Management Board Secretariat signed a new corporate Vendor of Record contract with MFP Technology Services Ltd. on July 13. The contract is for one year and may be extended for two more years.

This contract replaces the ministry's previous contract with Intertan. It provides MCSS — including the Caseworker Technology Project — with a way to easily acquire technology such as personal computing (PC) hardware, software, printers and network components. Prices are significantly lower (15 to 30 per cent, depending on the product) than those offered by the previous Vendor of Record. The contract also includes provisions for acquiring new generations of technology if superior products become available during the life of the contract.

A user guide with procedures, pricing and product information has been distributed to all MCSS offices. Normal purchasing practices will be used, but the process will require less effort since tendering will not be needed for individual items.

This contract allows for technology acquisition either on a purchase or lease arrangement. The ministry has traditionally purchased its PCs; however, leasing is an increasingly attractive option that recognizes technology as

an operating expense, and allows the technology to grow and change with our business and systems needs.

Leasing is preferred if you have staff/applications that require frequent technology upgrades. Leasing simplifies the process of upgrading, maintaining, replacing, redeploying and disposing of old technology, since the old equipment is returned as part of the upgrade process. Hardware prices continue to fall and by replacing equipment and negotiating lease payments before the end of the lease term, more powerful, newer technology can be acquired while either maintaining or often reducing existing lease costs.

Purchasing is preferred if you have sufficient budget and if you expect the useful life of the equipment to be greater than three years.

If you require equipment not covered by the Vendor of Record or if you feel that you can obtain comparable products at less cost, please contact Greg Mallett of Policy and Planning, Information Systems Branch (416-730-6463) to ensure compatibility.

If you would like any more information, please contact Mary Jo Dodds with the Operations & Support Unit, Information Systems Branch at 416-730-6463.

Dialogue gets the gold

Dialogue was given a Gold Award at the Information Officers' FORUM Awards Oct. 20.

FORUM is a volunteer organization for Ontario government communicators and the competition is an annual event held to recognize achievement in the

field of communications. Gold awards are given to entries that receive a score of 80 or higher (out of a potential 100). Entries are scored by an independent panel of judges that includes professional communicators and college/university communications instructors.

dialogue

Ontario Community and Social Services

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